

What is claimed is:

1. In a multimedia telecommunications network having facilities for providing a voicemail and multimedia mail service to a subscriber, a method of sending a personalized outgoing voicemail or multimedia mail message to a caller, the method comprising:
 - storing the subscriber's personalized outgoing voicemail and multimedia mail messages at a first network element;
 - receiving a call having a unique caller ID for the subscriber at a second network element;
 - determining at the second network element whether the subscriber has activated the service and whether the subscriber is unavailable to take the call;
 - where the service has been activated by the subscriber and the subscriber is unavailable to take the call, forwarding the call to the first network element;
 - analyzing at the first network element the caller ID of the call to determine which of the stored outgoing messages is an appropriate outgoing message for the caller; and
 - playing the appropriate outgoing message to the caller.
2. The method defined in claim 1, wherein the network includes an IP multimedia subsystem.
3. The method defined in claim 2, wherein the first network element comprises a voicemail/multimedia mail server.

4. The method defined in claim 3, wherein the second network element comprises a call session control function.

5. The method defined in claim 1, wherein the service is activated by entering a feature activation code.

6. The method defined in claim 1, wherein the service is activated by using the Internet.

7. The method defined in claim 1, wherein each of the subscriber's personalized outgoing voicemail and multimedia mail messages includes at least three fields, the fields comprising a message field, an associated caller ID field, and a feature activation status field.

8. A multimedia telecommunications system for providing a voicemail and multimedia mail service to a subscriber, the system comprising:

a first system element for receiving a call having a unique caller ID for the subscriber, determining whether the subscriber has activated the service, and determining whether the subscriber is unavailable to take the call;

a second system element for storing the subscriber's personalized outgoing voicemail and multimedia mail messages, analyzing the caller ID of the call to determine which of the stored outgoing messages is an appropriate outgoing message for the caller, and playing the appropriate outgoing message to the caller.

9. The system defined in claim 8, wherein the system comprises an IP multimedia subsystem.

10. The system defined in claim 9, wherein the first network element comprises a voicemail/multimedia mail server.

11. The system defined in claim 10, wherein the second network element comprises a call session control function.

12. The system defined in claim 11, wherein the service is activated by entering a feature activation code.

13. The system defined in claim 11, wherein the service is activated by using the Internet.

14. The method defined in claim 8, wherein each of the subscriber's personalized outgoing voicemail and multimedia mail messages includes at least three fields, the fields comprising a message field, an associated caller ID field, and a feature activation status field.

15. A multimedia telecommunications system having facilities for providing a voicemail and multimedia mail service to a subscriber, the system including:

means for storing the subscriber's personalized outgoing voicemail and multimedia mail messages at a first network element;

means for receiving a call having a unique caller ID for the subscriber at a second network element;

means for determining at the second network element whether the subscriber has activated the service and whether the subscriber is unavailable to take the call;

where the service has been activated by the subscriber and the subscriber is unavailable to take the call, means for forwarding the call to the first network element;

means for analyzing at the first network element the caller ID of the call to determine which of the stored outgoing messages is an appropriate outgoing message for the caller; and

means for playing the appropriate outgoing message to the caller.

16. The system defined in claim 15, wherein the system comprises an IP multimedia subsystem.

17. The system defined in claim 16, wherein the first network element comprises a voicemail/multimedia mail server.

18. The system defined in claim 17, wherein the second network element comprises a call session control function.

19. The system defined in claim 15, wherein the service is activated by entering a feature activation code or by using the Internet.

20. The system defined in claim 15, wherein each of the subscriber's personalized outgoing voicemail and multimedia mail messages includes at least three fields, the fields comprising a message field, an associated caller ID field, and a feature activation status field.